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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC, KMDR, BE

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION CIA EU GERMANY;BRUSSELS

I. (CIA) SECRET CIA PRISONS

MAROUN LABAKI IN LEFT-OF-CENTER LE SOIR (11/29)(CIRC. 100,200) COMMENTS: "THE EU COMMISSION SPOKE OUT. IT WAS HIGH TIME! SINCE THE SECRET CIA PRISONS AFFAIR BROKE OUT, THE EU COMMISSION FIRST AND FOREMOST GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF A HUGE EMBARRASSMENT

"HAS THE TIME OF A POLITICAL REACTION COME? IT IS TRUE THAT THE GENERAL CLIMATE IS NOT STIMULATING, WITH THE 'NO' TO THE EU CONSTITUTION AND THE BITTER FIGHT ABOUT THE EU BUDGET.

"STILL, THE EU COMMISSION IS A POLITICAL BODY THAT IS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE THAT TREATIES ARE BEING RESPECTED. THE SECRET CIA PRISONS' MYSTERY IS ALL EUROPEANS' BUSINESS, BECAUSE EUROPE IS MUCH MORE ABOUT VALUES THAN ABOUT MARKETS."

II. (EU) BARCELONA EURO-MEDITERRANEAN SUMMIT

IN THE WAKE OF THE FAILURE OF THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES TO COME UP WITH A COMMON DECLARATION AND UNDER THE HEADING "THE SMALLEST COMMON DENOMINATOR," GERALD PAPY IN INDEPENDENT LA LIBRE BELGIQUE (11/29)(CIRC. 46,500) COMMENTS: "THE RESPECT OF ONE'S SOVEREIGNTY IS A LEGITIMATE CONCERN, EXCEPT WHEN IT IS BEING USED, AS WAS THE CASE AGAINST THE AMERICAN GREATER MIDDLE EAST PROJECT, ONLY TO AVOID REFORMS AND TO MAINTAIN NON-DEMOCRATIC REGIMES.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ARCHIE M BOLSTER
DATE/CASE ID: 27 FEB 2009 200706444

"THE ABSENCE OF ALMOST ALL ARAB LEADERS AT THE BARCELONA SUMMIT LEADS ONE TO HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT THEIR WILL TO ACCEPT REFORMS"

III. (GERMANY) GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER STEINMEIER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON

FOREIGN AFFAIRS WRITER JORN DE COCK IN CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRAT DE STANDAARD (11/29)(CIRC.80,000) COMMENTS: "FOREIGN MINISTER FRANK-WALTER STEINMEQR'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON.WILL BE A DIFFICULT EXERCISE FOR SEVERAL REASONS. FIRST, FOR THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT ITSELF. ANGELA MERKEL, WHO EXPRESSED HER SUPPORT IN WASHINGTON
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AGAINST THE SCHROEDER ADMINISTRATION DURING THE IRAQ CRISIS, DID NOT GET THE COALITION WITH THE LIBERALS AFTER THE ELECTIONS THAT SHE PREFERRED. SHE HAS TO RULE WITH SCHROEDER'S SPD. MERKEL'S COALITION IS ALSO AWARE OF GERMAN PUBLIC OPINION. NO MEASURE OF THE SCHROEDER GOVERNMENT WAS MORE POPULAR THAT ITS OPPOSITION AGAINST THE WAR IN IRAQ.

"THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS ITS OWN PROBLEMS. PRESIDENT BUSH IS IN THE DEFENSIVE IN EVERY FIELD. THE TEMPTATION OF A LATE TACKLE AGAINST 'OUSTED' CHANCELLOR SCHROEDER WILL BE GREAT, BUT FOR WASHINGTON EVEN THE SMALLEST SUPPORT IS WELCOME AT THIS MOMENT. THAT MEANS THAT IT WILL MAINLY BE A MATTER OF COSMETICS TODAY WHICH IS IMPORTANT IN POLITICS. BUT, THERE IS AN ADDITIONAL PROBLEM. IN GERMANY, A MAJOR ROW HAS DEVELOPED OVER THE FACT THAT THE CIA USED AMERICAN BASES IN GERMANY FOR STOPOVERS DURING SO-CALLED 'TORTURE FLIGHTS.' THOSE FLIGHTS TOOK PLACE WITHOUT THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT'S KNOWLEDGE AND THERE IS MAJOR PRESSURE ON MINISTER
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STEINMEIER TO DEMAND EXPLANATION FROM THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION FOR THAT. EXPECTATIONS ARE THAT THERE WILL BE SOME LOUD CONVERSATIONS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS AND THAT, AFTERWARDS, A BONFIRE OF UNANIMITY WILL BE LIT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERAS."

IV. MEDIA REACTION PREPARED BY GASTON DE WINTER (DUTCH) AND PIERRE MANDERLIER (FRENCH). TEL. 32-2-5082413.KOROLOGOS

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